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REMARKS

Claims 21-35 are pending in this application. By this Response and Amendment, Claims 21, 22, 26, 27, 32 and 33 have been amended, Claim 25 has been cancelled, and Claims 36-39 have been added as new claims.

Claim Objections

The Office Action objected to claims 21, 32 and 35 because the Examiner believed that it was unclear how the sealing surface and the anti-rotation surface could be considered coplanar. Applicants direct the Examiner to Figures 1 and 2 of the application, reproduced below for reference.

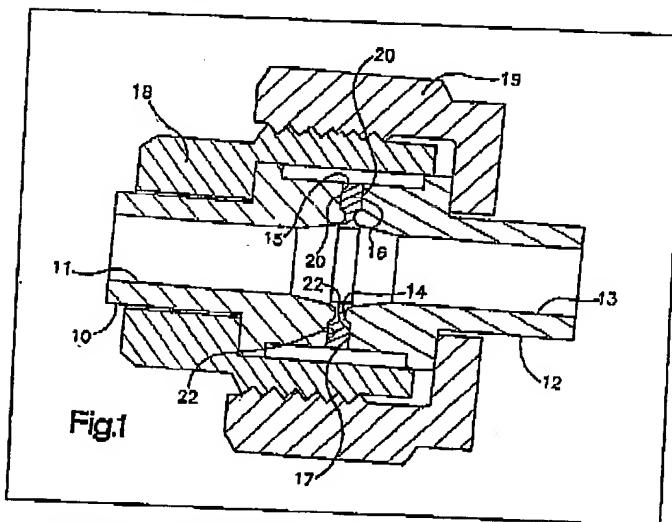


Figure 1 of US Patent App. No. 10/604,700

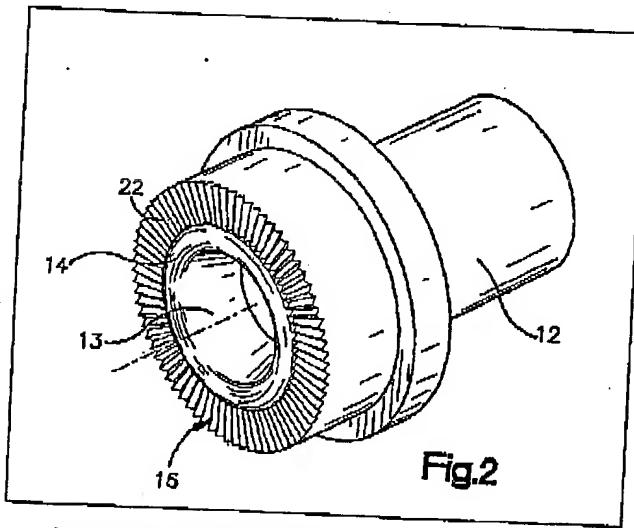


Figure 2 of US Patent App. No. 10/604,700

In Claim 21, the sealing surface is defined as the surface that contacts the sealing bead (14). The anti-rotational surface is defined as the surface that contacts the frictional surfaces (22). New Claims 36 and 37 now include the relative position of these two surfaces. The new claims, as

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well as Claim 32 indicate that the sealing surface and the frictional surface are either co-planar, or the frictional surface is slightly recessed. Support for these claims can be found in paragraph 0023 of the specification as filed. For example:

"The frictional surfaces 22 lie radially outwardly of the respective sealing beads 14, and engage the generally smooth gasket...the frictional surfaces 22 are formed by bands of knurling that extend axially forwardly a distance only slightly less than the axial height of the associated bead 14... whether the knurling extends axially outwardly beyond the associate bead 14 is not, however, critical."

In Claim 35, it is this same relationship and its association with the sealing and anti-rotation surfaces of the gasket that is claimed. In light of these remarks, Applicants believe that Claims 21, 32 and 35 should now be clear.

Rejection Under §103 in View of French Patent No. 378,493 in view of Babuder

The Office Action rejected claims 21-24 and 32-35 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over French Patent No. 378,493 in view of Babuder (US Patent No. 5,145,219). The Office Action indicates that French Patent '493 discloses the claimed invention, including a sealing gasket 5 which is captured between the sealing beads for sealing the coupling tubular members and the gasket contacts surfaces 6 and 7 which are coplanar and radially outward of the sealing bead. The Office Action further states that the French reference does not teach or disclose "frictional surfaces radially outward of the sealing bead to prevent relative rotation."

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However, independent Claim 21 recites, in pertinent part:

"said sealing gasket includes a sealing surface that contacts said sealing beads of said tubular members and an anti-rotation surface that contacts said frictional surface of said tubular members." (emphasis added)

The French reference does not include frictional surfaces, let alone a gasket anti-rotation surface that contacts the frictional surfaces. Babudar does not remedy this defect. Babudar encloses a gasket (125) in a member (140) and it is the surface of the member (142) that engages the frictional surfaces (150). As such, the combination of the references does not teach the claimed invention.

Independent Claim 32 recites, in pertinent part:

"a frictional surface located radially outward of said bead; wherein said sealing end face and sealing bead form a sealing surface and said frictional surface forms an anti-rotation surface, and wherein said sealing surface and said anti-friction surface are generally co-planar upon engagement with a sealing gasket." (emphasis added)

Claim 32 defines the anti-rotational surface as part of the frictional surface. Claim 32 further recites that the frictional surface and the sealing surface are generally co-planar. The French reference does not teach or disclose frictional surfaces. Babudar's frictional surface is greatly recessed as the frictional surfaces are designed to engage surface (142) of member (140). As such, the combination of the cited references does not teach the claimed invention.

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Independent Claim 35 recites, in pertinent part:

"said annular sealing beads contact said gasket to form a sealing surface and said frictional surface contacts said gasket to form an anti-rotation surface; and wherein said sealing surface and said anti-rotation surface are generally co-planar upon assembly of the coupling." (emphasis added)

Claim 35 recites that the anti-rotation surface of the gasket contacts the frictional surface of the tubular member and that the anti-rotation surface is generally co-planar with the sealing surface of the gasket. The French reference does not include a frictional surface. Babudar does include a frictional surface (150), however Babudar's frictional surface does not contact the gasket (125). Instead, Babudar's frictional surface contacts member (140) which is a plastic insert. Furthermore, the point of contact between the frictional surface and the plastic member are not generally co-planar to the sealing surface. As such, the combination of the cited reference does not teach the claimed invention.

Since the combination of the references does not teach, disclose or suggest the claimed invention, Claims 21, 32 and 35 are not rendered unpatentable in view of the cited references. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action indicated that claims 25-31 would be allowable if rewritten into independent format. New claims 38 and 39 include the subject matter of Claims 25 and 28 respectively. As such, Applicants believe that these claims are not in condition for allowance.

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Conclusion

For the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in proper condition for allowance and favorable reconsideration is requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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